

"Mackafee's Confession," in which a conscience-stricken sinner relates how he had poisoned all of his seven wives. The confession is the result of the fact that in his visions and dreams the seven wives appear "in a body," if not in the body and stand all night long by his bedside pointing accusing fingers toward him and in ghostly whispers commanding him to confess.

Another ballad tells of a love-lorn maiden who committed suicide because of unrequited love. We are told that her dying words were as follows:

On my breast place a turtle dove,
For to let the world know that I died for love;
And in my hand place a silver spoon,
For to let the world know that I died too soon.

Just how a silver spoon was to convey the idea of premature death was not made apparent in the ballad.

It is difficult to trace the origin of many of these old ballads, which, crude as they are when regarded as literary compositions, are an interesting addition to our American folk-lore and are worthy of preservation on that account. From these dismal and tearful ballads to the hilarious and grin-provoking "rag-time" songs of our own day is a far cry, but both have their place and purpose in any written history of vocal music in our country.

Churchill in Politics

By James Meade Adams

THE Republican caucus was drawing to a close, the candidates for speaker, clerk, assistant clerk and sergeant-at-arms having been nominated, when Winston Churchill, novelist and member of the New-Hampshire Legislature, rose, slowly and gracefully unfolded himself, and with a smile upon his face advanced to the front and addressed the chair.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "I rise to a forlorn hope. It is to ask for an office for Sullivan County. I wish to present the name of a worthy Republican and war veteran for the position of doorkeeper. I am fully aware that the mind of living man scarcely goes back to a time when the County of Sullivan received political recognition, and I do not suppose it can expect it now. Sullivan County is not even on the map in Frank Sanborn's history of New-Hampshire. But small though it is, Sullivan County deserves recognition, and I present the name of a man for the modest office of doorkeeper who is worthy of your vote."

Churchill's little speech lasted about three minutes, winding up with the name of a war veteran residing in the southern part of Sullivan County, who aspired to the office of doorkeeper in the New-Hampshire House of Representatives.

As a well-phrased humorous utterance, it was fair-

ly successful, but as a nominating speech it scarcely could have been worse. Perhaps Churchill did not know the hard-headed politicians he was addressing well enough to understand that he killed whatever chance his candidate may have had by his first sentence, and effectually buried him by succeeding ones.

The next morning the defeated candidate for doorkeeper, sore both over his defeat and the manner of the presentation of his name, met a political acquaintance from another part of the State at the hotel breakfast-table.

"Were you at the caucus last night?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Did you hear my name offered for doorkeeper?"

"Yes."

"What did you think of the way it was done?"

"Well," was the reply, "I thought Churchill was more of a literary man than a politician."

"Said 'twas a forlorn hope!" growled the defeated office-seeker. "How much chance did I stand after that?"

"How came you to get Churchill to present your name?" was asked. "Did you know him?"

"No," was the response. "But I'd heard what a great writer he was, and I thought he was the best man I could get in the whole county. 'Stepped o' that, anyone could have done better, and I might have stood some show."

BLUE JAYS AS HOUSE PETS

By Jeannette Robinson Murphy

ONE day lately a thoughtful small boy presented me with three pretty Florida blue jays. I have named the most active one "Dixie Baby"; the second one, which is large and sluggish, "Squanto"; the third, which is small, like "Dixie Baby," and very wild, shall be called "Sonny."

Dixie Baby and Sonny unfortunately lost their long tails in their struggle to be free when they were transferred into their large cage. After fruitlessly beating their wings against the sides of the cage for an hour or more, they all three have gone to pecking hominy and rice and drinking water, seemingly happy in their captivity.

Dixie Baby eats twice as much corn as the others do, for he has sense enough to turn the pointed end of the grain toward his beak. He evidently knows that in this way he reaches the heart more quickly than the duller birds.

They are extremely fond of raw Irish and sweet potatoes, and any kind of grain—in fact, whatever they fancy raw they accept as eagerly when it is offered cooked. They refuse to touch bananas, grapes, oranges, beans, onions, carrots or raisins, either cooked or raw. They eat only about a teaspoonful of bird gravel a day.

Dixie Baby is the only one that takes a regular daily bath; but as he deliberately chose the drinking-cup to bathe in, instead of a large bath-tub, I have put him in only the bath-tub the last few mornings, and now he jumps into that eagerly, and splashes the cage with water. It is a pretty sight to see him stretch himself in the sun to dry.

Any food they do not require immediately they cunningly hide under their cage paper for future use. This morning I changed the paper rather late in the day, about ten o'clock, and they seemed especially pleased, because this gave them an opportunity to search for and find all their buried treasures. It is most interesting to see them each get hold of a different corner of the cage paper and run backward with it till they see their hidden corn, nuts, etc.

A wild blue jay lighted on the cage a while ago, whereupon the kitten Yankee jumped upon the cage for the first time, and frightened the little bird nearly to death. "Hang! hang! hang!" cried all the jays at once. I did not lynch poor Yankee, however, as they begged me to do, but called to my assistance the huge St. Bernard dog Tiptoe. She has taken her stand at the window, and evidently intends to guard her new charges. They know by instinct that the great, gentle, shaggy dog will not hurt them, but the moment they spy Yankee anywhere in the room their screaming begins.



Playing Dead



An Unusual Pose



Squanto and Yankee

When a special delicacy like brown-bread or apple is put in the cage the blue jays give forth invariably a little chirp of contentment—it sounds like "burr—burr," rolling the R.

These charming companions are full of surprises. I learn upon more intimate acquaintance that they wash their bread before eating it, but not the corn.

To-day some acorns were thrown to them. Squanto seems perfectly at home in the art of extracting the delicious meats and dropping the empty shell; but it comes hard with the little ones, and after repeated failures Dixie Baby and Sonny cease trying to open them, and fly down to the bath-tub, and dropping them in, leave them there to soak. Though the water is changed several times a day, I always find a few acorns there being softened, and I have seen them take them out of the water and open them easily.

If I gently put my hand into the cage and quietly stroke their backs, they appear to be delighted; but if I make any sudden, quick movement they fly about in all directions.

I put a mocking-bird into the cage, and he fought them savagely. Then I removed him and introduced a red-winged rice-bird, or a starling, as they sometimes are called. He nearly pecked out the eyes of all the blue jays; and as they did not offer to defend themselves I had to remove this second fighter from them.

When I try to perch them on my finger they turn right over backward and hang up-side down, and there they remain perfectly motionless, as if they were hypnotized. I now can stroke them at any time, and they will turn over on their sides in my hand and lie for half an hour as if dead, and keep their eyes shut tight if I close them, though they keep peeping all the while.

After cutting their wings I closed the windows tight and opened the cage door. Dixie Baby was the first to take advantage of his liberty. All three of them flew madly against the window-panes and looking-glasses, and then after a few more efforts to escape they hopped about contentedly. I thereupon opened the window, and away they flew across

the street. After playing out for an hour in some low guava-bushes they were captured again with the help of about a dozen boys.

These remarkable birds rid any room of flies in a few moments, catching the flies as soon as they alight on the window-sill.

Since the birds are permitted to go in and out of their cage at will I find them playing all sorts of games, especially "catcher."

I empty the large sweep-basket and turn it on one side, and they all get upon it and roll and tip it from side to side, playing this game for about twenty minutes.

The cage door stands open all the day long now, and the birds play contentedly all about the room, flying across the street only once or twice a day. As their wings are clipped, they have to be brought back home. They fly around Tiptoe and Yankee, lying by the fire, and are not disturbed by their presence.

Sonny and Squanto have two black spots on their foreheads. All three have little roller-shades over their eyes, which they pull back and forth continually.

People who know whereof they speak tell me that it always is possible to tell when there is a snake after the chickens, because the jays immediately call "Snake, snake, snake!" and whenever they see anyone coming to despatch it they scream loudly: "Kill it! Kill it!"

It is a singular fact that on each tail-feather the black bars extend only half-way across. They do not reach over the part of the feather which is covered by the feather next to it. On the center tail-feather, however, the black bar reaches all the way across. This peculiar economy in tinting holds good in the wing-feathers as well.

They now will take food from my hand. They will not touch their beloved raw beef after five o'clock in the afternoon, and at six they all tuck their pretty heads under their wings and shut out the world, and appear just like fluffy blue-and-gray powder-puffs.

When a bit of sweet cracker is handed to them it is amusing to watch Dixie Baby. He eats all his own share, and then pulls away all he can from the others, then proceeds to hide it in his favorite spot in the wall by the fireplace, where the paper and the plastering are torn off. Then as if delighted with his prowess he instantly flies to his cage and mounts to the highest perch and turns his head from side to side and raises his topknot in self-adoration.

When they are left alone Dixie Baby screams incessantly till I return and talk to him. It makes him furious to be without human company for five minutes.